

Daily Reading & Meditation

My Spirit Rejoices in God My Saviour

SUNDAY 15 AUGUST 2021 GOSPEL READING: Luke 1:39-56

39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, 48 for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; 49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. 50 And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, 52 he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; 53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, 55 as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever." 56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Corinthians 15:20-27

20 Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 "For God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection under him," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things under him.

Meditation: How strong is your hope in the promises of God? Mary is a model of faith and hope for us. And she is among "the first-fruits" of "all those who belong to Jesus" and who share in his triumph (1 Corinthians 15:20-24). There is a venerable tradition dating back to the early church which marks Mary's "falling asleep" (called the Feast of Dormition in many Eastern churches) and her heavenly birthday when she was received into heaven. Her reception into heaven is seen as a sign to all believing Christians of the promise Jesus made that we too would be received into paradise. At the last supper Jesus told his disciples that he would prepare a place for them in his Father's house. "And when I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3).

The Holy Spirit makes faith come alive within us

What enabled Mary to grow in faith and to persevere in hope in the face of obstacles and trials? The Gospel of Luke reveals the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in Mary's life. When Elizabeth and Mary

greeted one another they were filled with the Holy Spirit and with a joyful anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promise to give a Saviour. John the Baptist, even before the birth of the Messiah, pointed to his coming and leapt for joy in the womb of his mother as the Holy Spirit revealed to him the presence of the Anointed King in the womb of Mary.

Those who are humble and hungry for God receive his Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us to enable us to know and experience the indwelling presence of God and the power of his kingdom. The Holy Spirit is the way in which God reigns within each of us. Mary accepted her mission with uncompromising faith and obedience. She acted with unwavering trust and faith because she believed that God would fulfill the word he had spoken. Her great hymn of praise echoes the song of Hannah (see 1 Samuel 2:1-10) and proclaims the favour of the Lord: *God exalts the lowly and he fills the hungry.*

The Holy Spirit fills us with the joy and hope of heaven

The Holy Spirit is ever ready to renew your faith and hope in God's promises and to make you strong in love for God and your neighbour. Do you live in the joy and confidence of God's indwelling presence with you through his Holy Spirit?

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *Christ the fruit of the faithful*, by Ambrose of Milan (339-397 A.D)

"You see that Mary did not doubt but believed and therefore obtained the fruit of faith. 'Blessed ... are you who have believed.' But you also are blessed who have heard and believed. For a soul that has believed has both conceived and bears the Word of God and declares his works. Let the soul of Mary be in each of you, so that it magnifies the Lord. Let the spirit of Mary be in each of you, so that it rejoices in God (Luke 1:46-47). She is the one mother of Christ according to the flesh, yet Christ is the Fruit of all according to faith. Every soul receives the Word of God, provided that, undefiled and unstained by vices, it guards its purity with inviolate modesty. (excerpt from *EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE 2.26*)

OPENING PRAYER Lord Jesus, fill me with your Holy Spirit and give me joy in seeking you more closely. Increase my faith in all your promises, my hope in the joys of heaven, and my love for You as my All. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- World and Covet19. Lord, Look upon the victims of Covet19 throughout the world with eyes of mercy, may your healing hands rest upon them, may your life-giving powers flow into every cell of their bodies and into the depths of their souls, cleansing, purifying, restoring them to wholeness and strength for service in your Kingdom. **Amen.**